

Daniel Davis: U.S. Attack on Iran Will Trigger Regional War

Lt. Col. Daniel Davis is a 4x combat veteran, the recipient of the Ridenhour Prize for Truth-Telling, and is the host of the Daniel Davis Deep Dive YouTube channel. Lt. Col. Davis discusses why a war on Iran will be an unpredictable disaster. Daniel Davis Deep Dive: <https://www.youtube.com/@DanielDavisDeepDive/videos> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glenndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. Today we're joined by Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis, a four-time combat veteran and host of the very popular *Daniel Davis Deep Dive*. We'll make sure to leave a link to it in the description. Thank you for coming back on the program.

#Daniel Davis

Always a pleasure to be here, Professor.

#Glenn

So we keep seeing the conflict with Iran on a knife's edge. It's unclear whether Trump is just building up enough military resources to attack, or if he's looking for an opportunity to walk this thing back. I tend to lean mostly toward the former, but I'm very happy to have someone with a military background like yourself, Lieutenant Colonel. Could you give us an overview of how you're assessing the situation—what kind of military hardware is the United States bringing to the region, and how ambitious is the U.S. in terms of what it can actually achieve with this?

#Daniel Davis

Well, you know, Rebecca Grant, an alleged expert in foreign and military affairs in the United States, went on Fox News a couple of days ago and kept saying there's this massive armada of combat power in the region that can do enormous damage, and so on. And look, just in isolation, the Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier battle group and a number of other ships are in the region. Also, lots

of air power has been flown in from some of our bases throughout the area, along with a lot of air defense capability. So, in neutral terms, there is a lot of combat power. But the question that has to be asked is: a lot of combat power to do what?

Because it matters enormously what you plan for that combat power to do. If you're just saying, "We're going to throw a bunch of missiles out there, hit them in the teeth, break some teeth, give them a bloody nose," you can do that with no problem. You can do that with relative ease from a distance, probably in ways the Iranians can't shoot back, and so on. But if, as Jack Keane said on Fox News today, you want to destroy the civilian and military leadership, the entire IRGC, the defense industrial base, their militias, take down their offensive rocket capacity, and destroy their nuclear program—which allegedly was already done, but we'll leave that aside for the moment—then that's a very different thing.

That is a massive, full-on combat campaign—what he talked about. That target list, and the amount of combat power Rebecca Grant referred to, isn't a fraction of what would be necessary to accomplish that kind of expansive objective list. I mean, that's something where you'd need three or four hundred thousand ground troops, along with a lot more air and naval power throughout the region, plus stockpiles that can sustain combat for an extended period of time. And I'm talking multiple months. If you don't have that kind of combat power in the area, if you don't have that kind of sustainment already prepared before you launch the first missile, you're setting yourself up for a lot of trouble.

And that's where I think we are. So, to answer your original question, we have a lot of combat power. But if it's just a demonstration, then you have enough to do that. And we're not even talking about the wisdom of it, but the military capacity is there for that. But if you think you're going to do what Jack Keane talked about, and if President Trump listens to people like that and thinks that's what he's going to do, and that's the military objective he gives his commanders, we're in a world of hurt. Because you're not going to be able to accomplish that, and you could be taking a lot of missiles coming back in your face—killing a lot of your own people and a lot of Israeli people as well.

#Glenn

Well, is this an issue of miscalculation then? Because within Trump's circle and his administration, there are surely a lot of people who want this war. Now, this isn't limited to this scenario—whenever you have people who want to go to war, they push it. They sell the war as something it's not. They make the government seem weaker or wobbly, like it could collapse at any time. They say their weapons are weak, that they don't dare strike back. So essentially, they're selling it with maximum optimism. But do you think that's the key problem—that these are the people whispering in the president's ear?

#Daniel Davis

Well, they're not whispering in the president's ear—they're shouting in the president's ear. And that's exactly the message they're trying to convey: that Iran is at its historic weakest point. They just had—well, number one, they had the 12-day war last year, which these advocates claim weakened them dramatically and knocked out a lot of their air defense capacity. A lot of their offensive missiles were used up, etc. Then these protests that began in December and went into January further weakened them—that's the claim right now. And the concurrent claim is that these poor protesters are rising up, so we've got to do something for them too. You have to have that human element.

You've got to have that heart tug. And all these pictures of Iranian protesters—probably, well, at least, I mean, all sides agree there were at least 3,000 protesters killed. Even the Iranian side admits that. The pro-war hawks on the Western side say it's more like 30,000—ten times that number. I don't know. I don't know what the number is; it could be that. But we had Secretary Bessette yesterday making a pretty profound admission on the Senate floor: we enabled that. We're the ones who set it up. We intentionally debased their currency. We intentionally made their currency crash so it would cause people to rise up. Of course, we've had these longstanding sanctions against them.

So while on the one hand we're saying "those poor protesters," on the other hand we're admitting we stirred that pot. Mike Pompeo admitted publicly—and apparently so did the Israeli press—that Mossad was on the ground there. We had all these Starlink terminals that were discovered, like 40,000 of them, I think. So obviously a lot of resources had been put in expressly to stir these people up, to get them to rise up, so that when the regime reacted the way we knew they would, we had all these images ready to send back to the American and Western public to make them agree that we should go in there. If you don't have that—if you don't have the heartstrings—then people would be going, "Wait a minute, what?"

Why are we going to war with Iran? You told me last year you destroyed their nuclear program, so there's no longer any threat from that. Why are you going in now? You said you were going to be the president who didn't start wars, who didn't have dumb wars—and yet here we are. So they can't have that, so they have to have something else, and now it's "those poor protesters." But then, weirdly, you had Secretary Bessette admit in public that we expressly stirred that up. And Pompeo, of course, talked about how we also went in on the ground and all that. You just have to wonder what's going on here, where we're admitting that we're stirring this up while simultaneously trying to use that as justification to launch a war with insufficient combat power to knock out something we don't even need to.

And it is as bizarre as it gets. You can't make all that fit together in any kind of coherent or logical system. We are literally setting ourselves up for disaster because, Glenn, we're leaving Iran the only path they can take—to strike back and attack us. I mean, if we go in and attack, they've been adamant in saying that this time they see no reason to withhold anything, no reason to restrain themselves as they had in all the previous rounds of this. Now, if we go, they're saying there won't

be any symbolic strikes or anything peripheral—any strike at all, and they're going to launch. And just imagine, from the perspective of the Iranians, you can say they're evil and wicked, whatever you want to say on that.

We're talking about human nature here. If someone is telling you that we've accumulated all this combat power with the express purpose of destroying you—and you have Lindsey Graham, Jack Keane, Rebecca Grant, Victoria Coates, among many others, saying, "No negotiations. We don't want any negotiations, Mr. President. We only want regime change"—then if you know that this combat power is there expressly to destroy your regime, you have no incentive to withhold anything. You have every incentive that if you get hit with one missile, you immediately start firing every half before it gets taken out, since that's the objective of the American side, according to Jack Keane.

So you've given Iran every incentive to hold nothing back—to cause the maximum number of casualties in Israel and the maximum number of casualties among American troops throughout that region. And look, we just don't have the combat power to bring this to a conclusion. All you can do is stir up the hornet's nest. You can kill a lot of Iranians, you can destroy all kinds of stuff, no doubt about that. But we don't have the sustainment to keep it going for more than a couple of weeks of high-intensity strikes. And Iran, I think, can conduct a campaign and keep it up for probably months. They probably have that kind of capacity.

#Glenn

I've been in a few debates on different TV networks over the past few days, and I noticed they always lean on the same kind of talking point, which is, "Well, look at these poor protesters," you know, because apparently the only people who care about Iran are the ones who want to bomb Iran. You can't be opposed to bombing—then you don't care about Iranians, apparently. But this whole argument that if you don't care about these poor protesters, that's the only reason you wouldn't want to send in the military and do regime change—of course, as you point out, the great point is that the whole argument falls flat when Glenn Diesen makes the point that we're the ones who instigated this protest.

#Daniel Davis

You know, Glenn, I would even question it without that knowledge. I'd say, based on what authority? OK, they're doing that to their protesters there—you don't like it. But by what power, what law, what authority does the United States, or Western Europe, or whoever, have to say that because you didn't treat your people right, we're going to go in and kill you and destroy your regime? Based on what logic? Is that what we'd want someone to apply to us? January 6th, 2021—when we had all that nonsense in our own capital—should some other country have said, "You're trying to overturn a legal election, you're trying to bring the wrong kind of person in, you're using force, so we're going to go in and bomb you because you're not letting the people's voice be heard," or something like that?

The protesters were being—you know, there's all that conflict going on, or something going on in Minnesota, or many of the things that have happened even in Europe over the past five or six months. Lots of protesters come up. Then should some other country—China, perhaps—be willing to come in and say, “Hey, we’re going to help out those poor protesters that you guys are beating,” or whatever, “and we’re going to interfere with that using lethal military power”? Obviously, we’d say no to that. But you can’t continually have this grotesque double standard of saying, “We have the power, so we’ll kill who we feel like, and we’ll use whatever standards we want when someone’s doing something we don’t like.” And no one would be able to do that to us when similar circumstances exist here.

And you can’t say, “Well, not as many people were killed here.” OK, what if we have a big insurrection? What if we have a big one in the future? What if there is a major uprising, and there are hundreds, possibly thousands of protesters, with lots of clashes where people could die? Would we then say that China or Russia can come in and intercede to help those poor Americans who are being killed by the legal authorities? Should they intervene then? Do you really want to set up a situation where, in the future, our very logic could be used against us? I mean, obviously, the answer is no. No one thinks that through, because I don’t think they care. So, with Glenn Diesen’s admission, it’s even more farcical. But even without that, it’s still really problematic.

#Glenn

Well, what are you talking about—the Chinese or Russians intervening in the U.S. in some hypothetical future scenario? We don’t have to look to those hypotheticals, because for the Europeans this is becoming reality. For decades, the Europeans completely aligned themselves with the United States in this idea that we can interfere anywhere we want to promote democracy. We can use military force if necessary, because we thought it was a kind of collective hegemony—standing on two legs, the U.S. and the EU. And now, suddenly, we notice that the U.S. is readjusting. It’s a multipolar world.

Europe is not a force amplifier or a priority. So suddenly, now Europe is on the outside. And we see the United States referring to, you know, those people who haven’t been taken care of in Greenland—maybe we might use military force to take it. And suddenly the Europeans are up in arms, like, “Oh dear, what happened to international law? We need rules.” They’re still fully on board with Syria, Iran, all these other illegal wars. But when we notice that we’re on the outside again, it’s not that far into the future. The distribution of power is not unipolar anymore. So this could happen quite soon, actually.

#Daniel Davis

So, you know, just look at that. I mean, let’s add one more grotesque double standard to the list here. We talk about using military force for democracy—we love to use that phrase a lot. But, man,

how can you argue any of that with Venezuela, with what the United States just did there, and with the concurrence and approval, if not the applause, of many of these European leaders? We went in there saying, "Oh, this is an illegal election, this guy wasn't legally elected, they're running drugs to America," whatever. We changed the dynamics everywhere. Then we went in with military force, killed, I don't know, 60, 80 people, something like that. We snatched Maduro, took him off—and then what? Did democracy come? No, we left the regime in place; we just elevated the next person.

The vice president is now in charge of that—the same regime, the same military, the same everything that you claimed wasn't legally elected. Now we're fine with it. No problem at all, as long as you keep giving us your oil money. I mean, that just exposes that it has nothing to do with democracy whatsoever. It's hard politics: I'm going to take your resources, and you're going to give them to me, or I'm going to go and kill the next leader, etc. And we have crickets on that. No one wants to stand up and say it out loud. It's so grotesquely obvious that we don't have any standards. There is no morality, there is no international law, there is no rules-based order—other than might makes right. If I have the power, I can do what I want, and you can't. And that's where we're at today. Congratulations, West.

#Glenn

To what extent do you think—because you brought up Venezuela—to what extent do you think that military operation caused some hubris? You and I talked about it, and again, it was successful in terms of the objective that was set and how the U.S. soldiers carried it out. But I heard, I think it was Lindsey Graham, who went out tweeting something along the lines of, "Well, I'm sure the Ayatollahs are watching this. Now they know what's going to happen if they don't bow down." I thought that was confusing, because I don't understand what one has to do with the other.

It wasn't a large, spectacular war using the whole Navy. They went in, kidnapped the president, and then pulled out. And that was Venezuela, which realized they didn't really want to punch back too hard, because that would trigger a larger war—not in their interest. But... well, what does this have to do with Iran? Are they going to go in and kidnap the leader and take them back to the United States? It's hard to see what one has to do with the other. This is a very different animal we're talking about. This would be a major war. So the hubris doesn't seem warranted, I guess.

#Daniel Davis

It's more... Hubris is a massive problem across the board. But this is just a priority, a primary effort in the information war. It's about trying to convince people in the United States that we have this most incredible—well, as Caroline Levitt said from the White House podium just yesterday, in advance of the round of negotiations in Oman that happened today between the United States and Iran—she said they need to keep in mind that we have the most powerful military in the history of the world, and they should think about that whenever these negotiations happen. Many people believe that.

And so, to foster that belief, we have to make the argument that what we did in Venezuela was a masterpiece of military art that only the United States could pull off—and that you can't do anything to stop us. Not mentioning, by the way, that we had a mole on the inside—massive insider help—so most of their air defense didn't even function. They didn't take into account, they didn't take under fire, especially our helicopters. A lot of that was a dramatic scene, because I think much of it was literally an intentionally made-for-TV moment, with all those explosions to make it look like we really accomplished something. But when you see all those helicopters that were flown—it's great imagery. I mean, it's great video.

You see all these helicopters highlighted against the explosions in the back, the flames, everything. And I'm just telling you, that many helicopters flying that low—someone with an AK-47 could just riddle them and knock down half of them with ground fire. If they'd been taken under fire. But it appears there was a deal made with somebody on the inside of Venezuela so that didn't happen. The air defense missiles didn't fire, because even a Stinger or a shoulder-fired weapon—much less their hardened sites—could have knocked every one of those helicopters down with relative ease at that range. They didn't take them under fire because we had the insider there.

So that's—what we did was just land, pick him up, because there was an arrangement made on the inside. They grabbed him, took him, and flew him right out. It was a two-and-a-half-hour operation. Most of it was made-for-TV stuff that had literally nothing to do with the situation in Iran. Now, for Lindsey Graham to say that—either he's incredibly naive, or, I'm just going to be blunt, stupid. Or his intention isn't to make the Iranian people or their leaders think anything, but to make Western audiences think that we're all that powerful, and that, yeah, those Iranians should be very scared.

Because the Iranians—number one—you can't go in there with a Delta Force and just snatch and grab somebody. There's not going to be any insider help this time, I assure you. And very much unlike the Venezuelan military, the Iranian military has demonstrated that it has profound capabilities in missile warfare. It's probably better with air defense than we've been led to believe. We'll find out, I think. It's not great, and it can be greatly diminished by what our capabilities are, so I don't want to minimize that either.

But if we start flying aircraft in that region, I think we'll find out, to our chagrin, that they have some anti-aircraft capabilities and can knock some of our aircraft down. They can, with some of their patrol boats, fast boats, and Kilo submarines, potentially knock out some of our ships too. So we can be harmed this time, completely—very much unlike what the Venezuelans could do. Even if they'd wanted to fight, they just didn't have the capacity; they would've taken it on the chin and couldn't have shot back, from what I understand. So those two situations are as different as day and night.

#Glenn

Well, a key difference—and this seems to be one of Trump's miscalculations—is the idea that they can do a limited strike. I think the Venezuelans were willing to take a bloody nose and walk away from it without more pain. But for the Iranians, if you let the U.S. come in and do a little bit of bombing—with the purpose of degrading the government, weakening the country further, and of course opening it up for future bombing—the goal is to weaken the country, with the end goal now being very explicitly regime change. But in a country like Iran, with regime change, there is no replacement regime. No one can unify the country. It's not just about toppling the government.

It means balkanizing the country, possibly destroying all of Iran. This is an existential threat. They can't just take one on the chin and walk away happy they didn't get more. I think when the foreign minister says, "We're going to hit back with everything we have, even if it's a small strike," there are good reasons behind that—it makes sense. Do you think this is the logic behind it? Because I think Trump brought in military equipment or weapons intended for just a few days of bombing. Then we tell the Iranians, "OK, we're done, now we go home," and the Iranians are just supposed to be happy that it's over. Do you think that's a miscalculation?

#Daniel Davis

That would be illogical if that's what he was doing. But let's look at the two situations here. With the Venezuela situation, they had an incentive to take it on the chin, as you pointed out, because we clearly communicated to them: we just want Maduro and your oil. And as long as I get both of those, you guys can stay—your regime can stay in power. So all these people, all the military people, all the political folks, they can keep their positions, they can keep their graft, and they can keep their corruption. It's legendary how bad it is there. But we gave them a motive. We gave them an out and said, yeah, you work with me here, you can keep this stuff.

On the other hand, we're signaling the opposite in Iran. We're saying you can't even live, that none of you can stay in charge. So if Trump actually has in mind that he's going to stage a demonstration—blow up a bunch of stuff and then walk away and somehow call it a victory—he's sabotaged his own chances by communicating that regime change is the only option. Whatever might have been possible if they had said, "All right, we're saying that publicly, but privately we're telling you we're just going to come in and make a demonstration," is gone.

And then we'll say, you know, we'll wag our finger at you and say, "Oh, you know, don't do it again." But that's all we're going to do. I don't think the Iranian side would, number one, believe us that that's all we're going to do. And I mean, they'd be fools to believe a word of it. The only thing I can imagine—trying to put myself in their position militarily—is that I'd expect you to be lying to me, as you have so many times, so I couldn't trust you as far as I could throw you. And the likelihood is that, because I know a lot of these people genuinely want me dead, I'd say, "All right, I'm going to use everything I have while I still can."

So if you start this, I'm going to try to reestablish deterrence on my terms—no more of this freebie stuff. No more assassinating Soleimani and almost nothing gets done about it. No more destroying our embassy like Israel did in Syria. No more assassinating people in our ranks. No more assassinating our leaders in their apartments, with their families. No more assassinating our scientists, and so on. Because if nothing happens, it'll never stop. Now, if you strike one thing, we're going to try to reestablish deterrence to make sure you pay a price—a bloody nose. That your people get killed and that your cities get hit here in Israel. And then we'll see how you want to play it.

That's what I would do. I can't imagine, just human nature, them not doing that and just saying, "Well, I really hope they aren't going to kill us this time. They'll just give us another big bloody nose." It just seems to me that would be illogical for Iran to do. But I don't know. I'm so frustrated, because I see radically mixed messages from our side that seem to imply two different things. And I look at the firepower that's been assembled here, and it doesn't match getting a regime change. You've got to have an army if you want a regime change of that nature. And if you want to defend your people in the area, we don't have enough combat power to match our rhetoric. So I don't know where this is going.

#Glenn

I think many people just want to be pulled into that war because once it's going, at least the intentions will be directed toward defeating Iran. And then maybe the capabilities come after. So I think they're underselling what capabilities there are, just to get the war going. Again, you want to make a war sound like a cakewalk—you'll be welcomed with flowers and then, of course, deal with the consequences later. But again, in terms of there being no trust, I think this point is sometimes missed by the political leadership, not just in the U.S. but in Europe as well.

I saw J.D. Vance make the comment that he thought Iran was—this is more or less a direct quote—"a very weird country," because when they do diplomacy, you can't even talk to the person in charge, Khamenei. And then Rubio said more or less the same thing. And I thought, well, you know, last time you had negotiations, you said you would close the deal, and then you launched a surprise attack on them—attacked their nuclear facilities—with all the possible consequences that could have had. And now they're talking about maybe assassinating the leadership. So of course they're going to make sure their key people aren't in a position where they can get knocked out.

It's just very strange to see that the assumption is there will be trust simply because we say we're not going to do this. But on the issue of deterrence, do you think this is something that's not being appreciated—the need to restore it? Because in the European setting, I always make the point that this is what's going to get the Europeans into a direct war with Russia. We don't seem to understand that they have to restore their deterrent. We attacked their radars, which they needed for detecting a nuclear strike. We attacked their nuclear retaliatory capabilities—their bombers. We attacked Putin's residence, where there might be a nuclear command center.

We're attacking their nuclear deterrent. We've been bombing them. We openly say it's our men, our weapons, all of this—and the Russians aren't doing anything. There's a desperate need now to restore their deterrent, and they don't understand that in Europe, I think. That's what's going to, I guess, trigger a war. But do you see this? Do they appreciate all of it—the need for Iran? You know, they just can't become another Iraq or Syria, where the U.S. or Britain or Israel bomb a little bit every now and then, and the Iranians don't want to make a big deal out of it. Do they understand that? Do they see what's happening around the region with great concern?

#Daniel Davis

No, no, they don't at all. They think this is going to be like—I mean, I just listed that whole line of things the U.S. or Israel, or both, have done to Iran over the years. And really, you can even go back decades before that, when all kinds of people kept getting assassinated, when cyberattacks destroyed a bunch of stuff. And there's literally never been any kind of real retaliation from Iran. So they believe that will always be the case. No one even thinks in terms of, "Will Iran, or should Iran, reestablish deterrence?" Because there isn't any right now. We're not deterred from anything, because there's no consequence to us.

So we keep killing people here, assassinating people there, launching some missiles, and we expect them to do nothing. I think that's the case here—like with the Yemenis. Yeah, they may fire a few things now and then, but basically, we can go in, blow up a bunch of stuff, and it's not a big deal. They're not going to do much to us. I think they tried to attack one of our ships at one point, but we managed to get out of that, and then we stopped doing it to avoid that possibility. But they can't do anything about it. Syria couldn't do anything about it. Bashar al-Assad—how many times have we sent missiles in there, or done any of the stuff we're doing here?

Nigeria, Somalia again, and recently back into Syria with some more anti-ISIS strikes that we claim. And there's no consequence to any of it, so there never will be. That's the belief. And I think it's also the belief that Iran can't do it, and that they won't do it. And if they try, they won't succeed, because—our, and I've heard this from a couple of different sources in recent days, from very high-ranking people—that we believe, at the higher levels, that our air defense will work. I don't know why they think that. When we had demonstrations with the best integrated air defenses in Israel that the United States and Israel together can put together, it went right through that.

I don't know why they think ours will, but somehow they do. No, to answer your question, I don't think we recognize that Iran has any kind of right to establish deterrence or try to, or that they have the capacity if they wanted to be foolish. But I think that ultimately we believe we can go in for free, attack, and they won't do anything—like Venezuela. So I think they've been seduced into the belief that nothing will ever happen, because it hasn't in Iran, it didn't over here. And I think one day all that foolishness is going to be exposed, and it's going to be bad.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, it just seems like Iran is probably the worst country in the region to attack. Not only is it big, it's powerful, and it sees this as an existential threat, meaning it will fight to the end. But, you know, I was there back in May, in Tehran, with Alistair Crook, George Galloway, Max Blumenthal, and others. One of my takeaways was the profound martyr culture. I mean, I don't want to compare it too much with the United States, but in the U.S. you have this strong "live free or die" kind of culture—this sense of, we're not going to live on our knees, we'd rather fight and die. And the Iranians also have a very powerful martyr culture. I just don't see them accepting any subordination or humiliating position. It just seems like these are the last people you'd want to fight with.

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, and Glenn, you know, I think the reason we haven't seen that manifest up to this point—and all those things I just mentioned—is because we made it clear, we signaled ahead of time, that we did not want a general war with Iran. And if we got one, they recognized that we could bring profound amounts of firepower down on them from all over the place, causing massive damage. So they had an incentive to take it on the chin a few times—to take the missiles, to take the destruction of their embassy, to take the assassination of people—because they could survive it. They could live to fight another day.

What's different this time is that, for the first time, we've set an existential threat to the regime that says, "You are the target this time." There's no taking it on the chin, no little shot here—we're coming for your regime. And now you've changed the dynamic. That's what's important, and I don't think enough people in the West recognize that we're changing the dynamics. The same logic that led a weaker Iran not to want to retaliate in those earlier cases is now flipped on its head, and now the only choice they have is to fight back with everything they've got. Otherwise, the regime is going to die, and I don't think we understand that we've changed the conditions for that.

#Glenn

Well, nobody wants to fight the United States, though. I mean, of all countries in the world, I think everyone would like to avoid that at all costs. The U.S. is immensely powerful. But, as you said, I think that's an excellent point—your downfall is the only alternative. If countries are pushed into a corner, they might do crazy things. Not crazy, but actually accept that, okay, we need a war with the U.S. I was wondering if you see some of the same logic with Russia or China, because many people in the U.S. kind of concluded that, oh, look, after what we did to Venezuela, it showed how weak the Russians were.

They didn't stand up for their friend. But, you know, I don't think anyone ever suggested that the Russians would. Would they sail into America's backyard and start fighting with America? I mean, that was fantasy—no one ever made that argument. But Iran is very different, though. If you're

Russian or Chinese and you're watching the possibility of Iran being destroyed, that instability might be a strategic stepping stone toward a war against them. So, do you think they would go to great lengths to assist Iran, to make sure it doesn't fall?

#Daniel Davis

Yeah, let me address that separately, secondarily. But first, I want to point out something that I think also matters, and that's from the Iranian perspective. I think they paid attention to Hezbollah last year, or a year or so ago, when the Israelis had been attacking. Of course, they got into a direct conflict—Israel actually invaded southern Lebanon and carried out these attacks. At that time, the claim was that Hezbollah had over 100,000 rockets of various types, some of them very good, and that they could saturate Israel's air defense systems if they wanted to, causing profound damage.

That never happened. And then you saw that the Hezbollah leadership there, with Hassan Nasrallah, had these weapons and apparently thought, "Well, I don't want to use them, because then I'll invite this stuff back," and so on. But then he was assassinated. All of his senior people—I mean, they almost decapitated the whole organization. And then finally it got to Nasrallah himself, and all those rockets stayed in their sheaths. They never used them, so Israel never had to pay a price for that. I think Iran is thinking, "We're not going to repeat that." I would imagine.

I've not seen anyone—I've certainly not talked to anyone in Iran—but I can't imagine they didn't pay attention to that and see that if Hezbollah actually had that kind of arsenal, they kept it in the sheath, and he went to his grave never having used it. I can't imagine the Ayatollah would repeat that mistake. If he sees it's going to get to that point again, he would use his missile arsenal, which is, of course, much bigger and more powerful than Hezbollah's. So that's one of the things I think Iran is learning a lesson from. Back to the Russia–China angle on this, I still don't think they'd be willing to go to the mat to fight the United States, even over this. I think they'll be helping Iran in some ways.

I'm guessing because a lot of flights have gone in from both capitals to Tehran. So we're left to guess and wonder what's actually on those. But I'm sure they're helping them with technology—maybe air defense capabilities, you know, to give them a more robust ability to defend themselves. But even if Iran falls, I can't imagine they would go to war with the United States, because the cost would be astronomical, and, you know, to go nuclear. So I don't think either one of them wants to do that. But I also can't imagine they would take this lying down and just say—

Bummer, because that would make them both look even weaker and make us believe our own press even more—that we're this unstoppable force and can literally do anything. I think they'd probably take some asymmetrical actions or attacks against us, and they'd start working against our interests in other ways that would be harder to detect but could have more long-term impact. That's, you

know, undermining the dollar, working against our business interests in some places, things like that—maybe some more cyberattacks, etc. So I think they'd do things to defend themselves, because they also have to make sure they don't come off looking weak to the BRICS there.

They want to show that they're, you know, a powerful alternative—economically and in terms of stability. But if they show that they're utterly impotent in the face of U.S. military force, then that's going to make people hedge and say, "Maybe we'd better not be putting our, uh, you know, our eggs in the basket of China and the BRICS, because they can't even defend themselves." But if they see that we don't succeed there, that we stumble militarily, and that—because of some help—the Iranians are able to stand up to us, then it has the opposite effect. Now it makes people think it's America that doesn't look stable. "I'm going to put more of my eggs in the BRICS basket." And that leads to a further weakening of the dollar, which, you know, has been going down for quite some time. Then you could have a situation where China and Russia don't have to fire a shot—they can just watch us self-destruct.

#Glenn

Yeah, I should have been more specific. I don't think China or Russia would fight the U.S. But in terms of providing weapons or intelligence for targeting—well, if you look at what NATO has done in Ukraine while pretending not to be a participant—it opens up a lot of room. You know what I mean?

#Daniel Davis

I think there's a chance they may be at that point now, for that reason. I've frankly been surprised that Russia hasn't done it already, given how easily we've been doing it. This goes back to the Biden era, when we were using targeting, intelligence, and our weapons to strike deep into Russia. And Putin mentioned that they would no longer feel constrained against potential enemies if we did that—and we did. So far, he hasn't taken action on it. But, you know, he may come out and say, "What's good for the goose is good for the gander," and decide to do the same. I don't know. He hasn't so far, but maybe we're getting to that point where the calculation finally moves in that direction for Russia.

#Glenn

Well, we're out of time, so let me just ask a very short question—just a yes or no. We can avoid war if the negotiations are successful, but is there, I mean, a snowball's chance in hell that anything can actually be achieved at these negotiations?

#Daniel Davis

Listen, there are no negotiations that need to happen for success. It's purely that President Trump needs to not give the order to attack, because there's nothing really to negotiate. I mean, if you

want to have something just so Trump can have some kind of claim to success, then Iran is willing to say, "We'll do something on the reprocessing. We'll only reprocess to a certain percentage," whatever. And you can have some inspectors come back in or whatever. So they'll do something like that. That's already on the table, so we can have that.

But really, it's just about whether Trump gives the order to attack or not. He obviously couldn't care less about negotiations. I mean, we've done that in the past. We did that in 2025 when we attacked. We'd had, I think, five rounds of negotiations, and the sixth one was planned. We went in anyway, so he could care less about that. You may recall—I want to say it was about thirty-six hours before the attack—he said, "Well, I'm going to give them two weeks of negotiations," and of course he never meant any of that. So you can't trust a word President Trump says when it comes to negotiations. But it does come down to the calculation.

If he recognizes that the cost would be way too high and the chances of success way too low, he can pivot in a heartbeat, not order this, and take the face-saving win of getting some negotiations. Even though it will anger the likes of Jack Keane, Mike Pompeo, Lindsey Graham—all these folks who are passionately advocating for war—they'll be angry, they won't stop, they'll try again later, and they'll grit their teeth. But President Trump can say no to them, so there is that hope. Yeah, well, thank you very much for your time and for sharing your insights. I was really looking forward to this talk with you, as I needed a military perspective on this. So thank you very much. Always my pleasure—thanks ever so much.